

D-NPS-K61029-CA



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

LO
970429

DEC 30 1997

B.J. Griffith, Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

Dear Ms. Griffin:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the **Yosemite Valley Implementation Plan**. Our comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The DEIS evaluates four alternatives for carrying out provisions of the 1980 General Management Plan (GMP). Alternative 1 is a "no action" alternative which would continue implementation of the GMP, including restoration of 41 acres to natural conditions. Alternative 2 proposes a comprehensive approach to implementing the GMP, including restoration of 147 acres to natural conditions, and development of a visitor orientation/transfer facility on 37 acres at Taft Toe. Alternative 3 is substantially similar to Alternative 2, except that the orientation/transfer facility would be located at Pohono Quarry. Alternative 4 proposes the restoration of 118 acres to natural conditions and the development of 36 acres to accommodate relocated facilities. The Park Service has not selected a "preferred alternative," although Alternative 2 is referred to as the "proposed action."

EPA commends the Park Service on the development of a proposed action which seeks to deal with traffic and congestion issues in Yosemite Valley in a comprehensive fashion. We support the goal of developing a regional transit system and a valley shuttle system to reduce impacts to air quality and wildlife. The Park Service deserves praise for designing a plan which will hopefully serve as a model for other Parks experiencing traffic congestion at levels which threaten to destroy the visitor experience.

In addition, we have noted that employee housing in Yosemite Valley will be limited to 765 employee beds under all of the DEIS alternatives. This figure essentially matches the 769 employee bed figure which we suggested in our comment letter on the Yosemite Housing Plan. Since the Yosemite Housing Plan has not yet been released in final form, we were pleased to learn that the Park Service has opted to limit employee beds in line with our earlier recommendations.

Since we have no objections to the proposed plan, we have rated this DEIS LO (Lack of Objections). We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. If you have questions, please call Leonidas Payne of my staff at (415) 744-1571.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Farrel, Chief
Federal Activities Officer

EPA REGION IX SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

ERP NUMBER: D-NPS-K61029-CA

CEQ NUMBER: 970429

DATE OF EPA COMMENT LETTER: 12/30/97

DATE SENT TO EPA HQ: 01/05/98

NAME OF PRINCIPAL REVIEWER: PAYNE

NAME OF PROJECT EIS:

Yosemite Valley Comprehensive Implementation Plan

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH:

expressed

proposed action.

EPA ~~had~~ no objections to the Park Service's ~~proposal to construct~~
~~a visitor orientation / transfer facility at Taft Toe and~~
~~implement a valley shuttle bus system to reduce congestion in~~
~~Yosemite Valley.~~

APPROVED FOR FEDERAL REGISTER PUBLICATION BY: _____